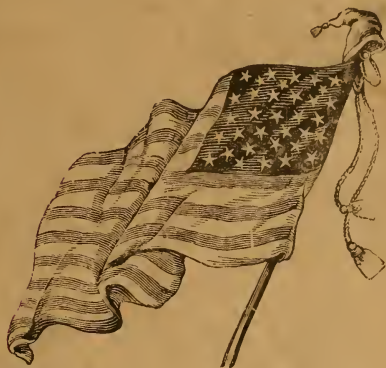


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RECOLLECTIONS.

Wm. F. O. C. Cochran.



Camfordville, Ind.

1877.



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RECOLLECTIONS AWAKENED
BY THE
Unveiling of the Thomas Statue!
BY THE
ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND.

I belong to the army of the Cumberland; enlisted when that high-souled patriot, Gen. W. S. Rosecrans, was its commander. Was promoted from the ranks by my marriage to one of its officers. More than one Southern girl enlisted this way, assisting thus far in the restoration of the Union. To day memory revives thrilling scenes of past experience in the dark days of *Civil Strife*; before the boys in blue had reached our home, or I had hailed that "banner whose loveliness hallows the air," when borne by a patriot's hand. (For a time I was the only member of my family devoted to the Union cause.) Among my warm personal friends of the Federal army, I recall the names of Generals Sheridan, McCook, Negley, Palmer, Steedman, King, Stanley, Mitchel, Banning, the noble John Abbett, of Indianapolis, Dr. J. T. Woods, of Toledo, and many others of line and field rank, with thousands of private soldiers, so dear to all hearts, who,

in their zeal for a loved country, swept bravely on to death in her defense; but these cherished ones are too numerous to mention.

The friends of the Union were few and far between in those hours that tried patriot souls; and could not at once be distinguished from the rebel horde. Frequently the property of the Union man suffered damage and destruction at the hands of the Federal soldiery, before the facts in the case could be ascertained. To some extent we were among that number. But to the recital of the more exciting past, now moving before me like a panorama. My first experience, though a young girl, was the arrest and trial for treason toward the Southern Confederacy, because of innate patriotism and fearless expression of loyal sentiment, when my position was asked. By traitor hand I was marched at the point of the rebel bayonet from the bosom of my home to a court of secession, purposely called in one of the public buildings in my native town (Franklin, Tenn.) there jeered, mocked and sentenced to imprisonment in a more remote portion of the South, for to all their charges I answered guilty. Through the assistance of a faithful old slave, I escaped the guard, making my way to the Federal lines, where warm hearts received me. I never stopped until reaching the headquarters of the Post. These facts are still fresh in the memory of many now residing in Franklin.

But as time moved on, a holier mission was given me, --the care of the sick and wounded soldier. I had means then, and with generous hand alleviated the sufferings of many, but always in company with my mother and darling sister, who really nursed more in the hospital than myself,

for there was a time I could not work. Our family were also divided in sentiment. A married sister, residing in Augusta, Georgia, (whose husband was a Confederate officer,) was on the wrong side, and a dear brother in the Confederate service. My father died previous to the outbreak of the Rebellion. But the bitterest trial of the past, to which I am referring, was the battle of Franklin and the interval. We remained in the Rebel lines after Gen. Schofield had 'beckoned' the Southern Army on to Nashville.

Our residence was located so near the din of the engagement that we could count distinctly each charge that was made.

From a rambling shot and shell,
Round our door-way fell
Many a valiant soldier.

(The Federals held in reserve a new regiment near by, but on that occasion they were not called into service.) Some who were wounded were brought into the house. We occupied the cellars, and those requiring immediate attention were brought below to us. Any errands to be attended to had to be done between the charges, my sister once barely escaping with her life, a fragment of shell having struck a tin crockery safe on the back gallery as she was passing. The servants and myself were engaged in tearing up garments for mother and my sister to dress the wounds, which task was performed the best they could. This battle was fought Nov. 30, 1864, and was one of the hardest contested engagements of the war. But to return. I was not in a condition to witness such sickening scenes, expecting each day to become a mother, yet nerved my-

self for the trying ordeal at its beginning, 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It was 10 o'clock and still the fierce conflict was raging and continued until near midnight. At 15 minutes before 12 o'clock, my husband and Maj Wm. J. Twining, now residing at Washington, D. C., dashed swiftly away on their horses to join their commands, then moving on to Nashville. Whether it was a last farewell we could not tell. The conflict of feelings in the sobing adieu and the expected meeting of a beloved brother, in life or death, may be better imagined than described. The sad morning was ushered in by the firing of 112 rounds of Rebel artillery, sounding as though the infernal regions had broken loose! In speechless grief we sat beside our shattered windows, waiting for the dawn. A little before daylight in came our precious brother, Will, whom we had not seen for over three years. Oh, the joyful meeting! And his first greeting since my marriage (though he knew my sentiments before leaving home.) But he must join his regiment the same day, which was to march on to the blood-stained field of Nashville. The call of duty soon found us at our post. The town and vicinity contained five thousand wounded rebel soldiers. Six Confederate Generals had been slain. Oh, that cruel battle-field! I can never describe it. Here, lying across the breastworks, was Gen. Cleborn, of Arkansas, his noble steed beside him. As the Indian warrior has many of the shackles of life lain in the grave with him, so by the dead Rebel soldier lay his utensils of scanty comfort, his tin grater, used under privations, to grate his parched corn, to make him bread. None but the Father in Heaven will ever know all those poor, misguided fellows endured for

the lost cause. There were few Federals wounded, compared with the rebel loss. But there were very few friends to care for them; only one assistant surgeon of the Federal army had remained to help care for the wounded, and he proved to be of very inferior quality, and would have been dismissed from the service for cruelty to the wounded but for the simple fact of his having remained. His name was Tarleton, and he was exceedingly thin.

We took charge of one hundred and twenty Federal soldiers, occupying a church and two smaller houses owned by us. We had been able to conceal more provisions than some of our neighbors. (Our negroes were our friends, and would not betray us to anyone.) We could not tell the length of time it would have to last for those wounded men and ourselves. Mother and sister were most of the time in the hospital, frequently spending the night raising the dizzy, dying creatures to administer food or medicine, and store in their memories for them a last message to their loved ones. I hope that some for whom we have cared may see this sketch and know that we love them still. I remained at home to assist the servants in cooking. On my knees rolled out many a bushel of crackers, because it hurt me to stand; and, oh! the gallons of soup I did make. At the end of the sixteenth day after the battle, every mite of food had been distributed around. We didn't know but that we should all starve together. The rebels had not enough for themselves and own loved ones. The rebel soldiers who were able to walk around, with their bayonets cut up pumpkins and eat them uncooked, as if they were some rare fruit. On the morning of the seventeenth day we saw that the rebel army was on a

retreat from Nashville. We knew that we should now have food. But, oh! how sad were our hearts, and our cheeks were wet with tears as we gazed on the straggling soldiery, some with bare and bleeding feet, many without any covering for their heads, save the sky above them, and then with pants ripped almost to the waist and, like a bird of evil omen, flapping against their bruised limbs as they strode wildly along in the cold November rain to greater privation than before. Thank God, it was for them the darkest hour before the radiant day! In the language of "Harrison Millard," one of the noblest patriots that ever blessed our land, the dawn brought —

“No North, no South, no New England, no West,
But *one Country*, always the greatest, the best.”

Yet one sad question we dare not ask each other, *where was Will?*—a son and brother dear. We knew among the slain, dying on the battle-field, on the retreat or a prisoner, the latter for which we prayed ardently. Nor did we hear from him until after the battle of Bentonville, North Carolina. Then come to our hearts a letter from his prison-home. It was at this time that Gen. George H. Thomas became our warm, personal friend, when his great generous heart extended so much sympathy in acts of kindness to us, though I had known him long before. He was so modest, so gentle, never parading his greatness, a pure patriot and one of the bravest Generals of the army. It was most fitting that the gallant Army of the Cumberland should be in attendance at the unveiling of his statue, erected now in the heart of Washington, *his memory enshrined in the heart of the Nation!* Even as we fondly

raise the veil to look for the last time on the face of a dear one departed, so did my soul yearn to be present on the dear, sad and glorious occasion of the unveiling of the statue of "Gen. George H. Thomas." But this was not possible. I must, like a true soldier, march on to the call of duty here in the support of two dear children and self. My recreation must be from the treasures of memory, *financial ones* having vanished during my widowhood.

MRS. F. OCTIE COURTNEY COCHNOWER.

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND., November 22, 1879.









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